

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 2 are pending and rejected.

The applicant's attorney cancels claims 1 and 2, and adds claims 3 – 11. The applicant's attorney respectfully asserts that claims 3 – 11 are in condition for allowance because U.S. Patents 5,943,705 issued to Sink (Sink) and 5,867,839 issued to Lawlor (Lawlor) each fails to disclose engaging a hook disposed on either the second end or the first end of a strap with a corresponding loop disposed on either the first end or the second end, respectively, to releasably attach the first end to the second end.

For example, as shown in FIG. 4, the strap 16 includes a first end to which the ring is attached, and a second end that is opposite the first end. When the first and second ends are releasably attached to each other the first end lies on top of the second end.

In contrast, Sink discloses a strap 10 that includes a first end having a ring 32 and a second end opposite the first end. As shown in FIG. 5, the first and second ends of the strap are attached to each other via the ring 32. To attach the second end to the first end, the second end is inserted through the ring 32 and then folded back onto itself to grip the ring 32. Unlike the applicant's claimed method, Sink's first end does not lie on top of the second end when the ends are attached to each other.

Likewise, Lawlor also discloses a strap 30 that includes a first end 36 having a ring 41, and a second end 37. As shown in FIGS. 2, 3, 7, 8, 12 and 13, the first and second ends 36 and 37 are attached to each other via the ring 41. To attach the second end 37 to the first end 36, the second end 37 is inserted through the ring 41 and then folded back onto itself to grip the ring 41. Unlike the applicant's claimed method, Lawlor's first end 36 does not lie on top of the second end 37 when the ends 36 and 37 are attached to each other.

Conclusion

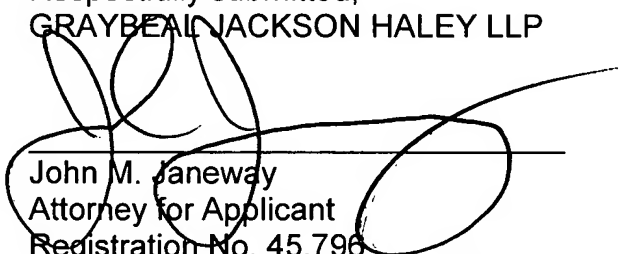
The applicant's attorney respectfully requests the examiner withdraw the rejection of claims 1 and 2, and issue an allowance for claims 3 – 11 in view of the amendments and remarks.

Should any additional fees be required, please charge them to Deposit Account No. 07-1897.

If the examiner believes that a phone interview would be helpful, he is respectfully requested to contact the Applicants' attorney, John Janeway, at (425) 455-5575.

DATED this ^{4th} day of October 2005.

Respectfully submitted,
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